

Ophthalmology in Hawaii 1997 and Beyond

Russell T. Stodd MD

While we have served, performed, studied and prepared, almost before any of us have realized it, the 21st century is at our door. The date represents a junction, or perhaps a new beginning in our minds, for the future of ophthalmology and eye care in Hawaii, but it is merely a continuum.

The dynamics of the evolution in the preservation of sight for Hawaii's people border on fantasy. As the various articles in this Journal testify, the level of care in Hawaii today rivals any metropolitan community in the western world.

The tools available for eye surgeons of 1960, were not significantly better than the tools of one hundred years previous to that time. One wonders, did we actually perform eye surgery without microscopes? Was it possible to care for patients without lasers? Did we not always have viscoelastics, exotic gases, steroids, multiple antibiotics, glaucoma valves, intraocular lenses, ganglionic blockers, enzymes and enzyme inhibitors?

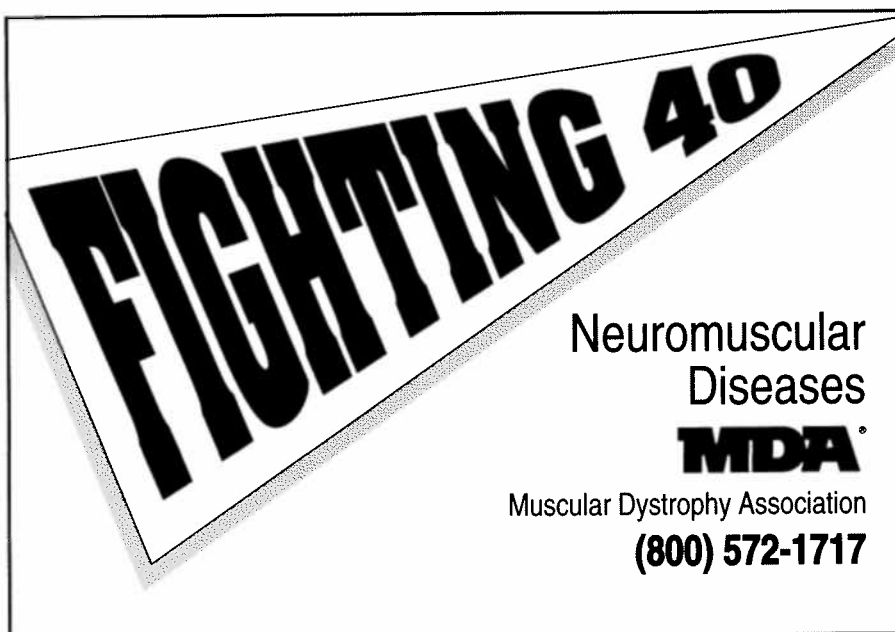
What has evolved in America and the world of scientific medicine is a system of communication and cooperation which permits ideas, devices, medications and procedures to be shared electronically in the blink of an eye. Here in the islands, the most remote from any continent, we enjoy ophthalmic medical facilities of the finest quality, and the most modern in development, with matchless technical equipment. Moreover, there prevails an abiding desire in the medical community to maintain a level of unexcelled skill and knowledge.

Conferences, seminars, courses, forums, and open meetings abound in various locations all around this state. Scholars, professors, and research scientists from around the world are constant visitors to our islands. In addition, Hawaii has a broad collection of skilled and knowledgeable ophthalmic physicians who have been educated and trained in the most prestigious eye centers in the world. Contributions in research by Hawaii's ophthalmologists are ongoing and are frequently published in current ophthalmic literature.

Twenty-two years ago, eye surgeons of Hawaii joined together to establish the Hawaii Ophthalmological Society. This organization has enlarged and prospered, welcoming all qualified eye physicians. It has grown to become the voice of medical eye care in Hawaii, offering regular scientific meetings, participating in educational fairs, and offering testimony before the state legislature on medical issues.

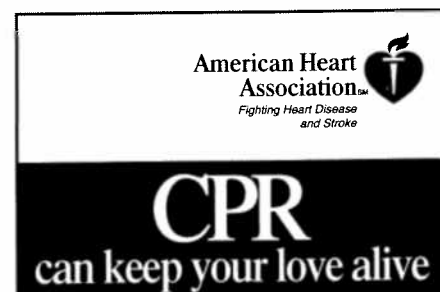
Along with this unparalleled development of physicians and equipment, the desire to provide access for all is unquestioned. Sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology, many of Hawaii's ophthalmologists participate in the National Eye Care Project. The NECP maintains a comprehensive listing of physicians who agree to provide services for the medically indigent. This system records each patient request for free eye care and assigns a Hawaii ophthalmologist in rotation. No one is denied access for lack of ability to pay.

As the year 2001 approaches, the citizens of Hawaii as well as organized medicine can take pride and satisfaction in what has been built for comprehensive eye care. Moreover, the future for the perfection and preservation of eyesight is bright and the vistas limitless. The goal of eliminating the fear of blindness from vascular disease, glaucoma, diabetes, macular degeneration, and other conditions, is a reasonable one and is within our grasp.



FIGHTING 40

Neuromuscular
Diseases
MDA
Muscular Dystrophy Association
(800) 572-1717



American Heart
Association
*Fighting Heart Disease
and Stroke*

CPR
can keep your love alive